



To Life! HEALTH & FITNESS

All Zipped Up! Robes inventor finds cure for hospital gown woes.

Robin Schwartz
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Protecting hospital patients from “over exposure” is Paula Milgrom’s passion. The 54 year old from West Bloomfield knows firsthand the vulnerable, not fully covered feeling of wearing a standard issue hospital gown. In 2004, she was hospitalized for five days with a blood clot in her leg.

“At first, I was flat on my back with an IV for two days,” Milgrom says. “Then I could get up and walk around but still had the IV. I had a hospital gown with the back open and I put another one on backwards to cover up the back. They were both falling down, the ties didn’t tie, and I started to think there has to be something better.”

Several months later, while visiting her sister who’d undergone surgery, Milgrom once again saw the shortcomings of the usual hospital garb.

“People didn’t cover up and it was so undignified and humiliating,” Milgrom recalls. “I remembered how I felt and decided I was going to do something about it.”



Entrepreneurial Idea

Milgrom has a background in paint manufacturing, but no previous experience with clothing. She was the vice president of operations for Mercury Paint Company in Detroit, her family’s business for 20 years.

“I ran a factory where we manufactured a million gallons of paint a year.” Milgrom says. “But I was always looking for something that I might do with more passion.”

You could say she found it in a zip. Milgrom purchased housecoats from local retailers, experimented with separating zippers, selected fabric and sought out the advice of a dressmaker. Before she knew it, she had a prototype of a robe that fits over a hospital gown, and her new company, RxPJs, was born.

“The robe has zippers at the shoulders that completely separate, so you can still wear one if you’re hooked up to an IV,” Milgrom explains. “It doesn’t cause any problems for the nurses; and if you want to go for a walk, sit in a chair or if somebody’s coming to visit, you can look appropriate.”

Finding a Niche

Milgrom still needed to put her product to the test in a medical environment. So while her sister continued to recover from surgery, she set up a small focus group of doctors and nurses in the hospital.

“I wheeled in this little suitcase and my questionnaires,” Milgrom says. “I got feedback and suggestions and we made some adjustments,”

In March, she began selling her new line of unisex, one-size-fits-most robes for adults (\$72) and children (\$60) made of lightweight thermal material. RxPJs also makes shorter bed jackets, which sell for \$50. The University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor recently ran the robes through its laundry process and Milgrom says they passed with flying colors.” Several retail stores, including Lori Karbal in Birmingham, carry them. A hospital in Missouri placed a large order. Milgrom hopes to supply other hospitals in the future.

“I never thought of myself as an inventor,” she says. “But, I’m passionate about my product. It’s a niche market, but it’s definitely needed. When you’re so vulnerable in the hospital, the robes are a real comfort. This is a simple way to make people feel better, and it works!”

**For more information about
RxPJs, call (248) 892-3939
or go to the company’s Web site,
www.rxpjs.com**